

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 5 and 7 are amended. In addition, the specification is amended to correct obvious typographical errors therein. Claim 1 is amended to even more clearly distinguish over the applied reference, claim 5 is amended to be consistent with amended claim 1, and claim 7 is amended to address the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. All amendments are supported by the original specification, and thus do not introduce new matter. With respect to independent claim 1, see, for example, Figs. 3-5 and page 12, lines 3-5 of the specification. With respect to claim 7, see, for example, caulking portion 81c shown in Fig. 3 and page 8, lines 14-16, for example.

Claim 7 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants respectfully submit that the above amendments to claim 7 overcome this rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

Claims 1, 2 and 4-6 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,635,489 to Imamura et al. In addition, claims 3 and 7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Imamura et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to clarify that each of the plurality of first friction plates is provided stationarily to the housing and that each of the plurality of second friction plates is provided stationarily to the internal gear. Imamura et al. does not disclose or suggest such a combination of features. The Office Action asserts that elements 24 and 26 of Imamura et al. correspond to the plurality of first friction plates and that elements 23 and 25 of Imamura et al. correspond to the plurality of second friction plates. However, friction plates 23 and 24 of Imamura et al. are not attached to either a housing or an internal gear, but rather are free to rotate. See, for example, Fig. 8 of Imamura et al. (which shows that the friction plates 23 and 24 have no structure for connecting them to the internal gear 19 (as is done by projections 25a of rotary disc 25) or to the center bracket 20 (as is done by the projections 26a on stationary

disc 26)). Also see col. 5, lines 57-62 of Imamura et al., which describes the plates 23 and 24 as having slight clearances so that they do not contact the internal gear 19. As shown in Figs. 13 and 14, for example, the internal diameter of the rings 23 and 24 is sufficiently large that they do not contact the center bracket 20, unlike stationary disc 26 which contacts the center bracket 20.

Imamura et al. describes that only the rotary disk 25 is attached to the internal gear 19 (see col. 5, line 58 - col. 6, line 5) and only the stationary disk 26 is attached to the center bracket 20 (see col. 6, lines 5-12). Thus, Imamura et al. does not disclose or suggest the claim 1 arrangement in which a plurality of first friction plates are provided stationarily to a housing, and a plurality of second friction plates are provided stationarily to an internal gear. As described in the specification, such an arrangement enables a larger torque to be transmitted. See, for example, page 2, lines 12-21, and page 12, lines 14-25 of the specification.

Thus, Imamura et al. does not disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in independent claim 1 or in the dependent claims. Withdrawal of the rejections is requested.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



James A. Oliff
Registration No. 27,075

Mario A. Costantino
Registration No. 33,565

JAO:MAC/jth

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OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
P.O. Box 19928
Alexandria, Virginia 22320
Telephone: (703) 836-6400

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